ETSU OLD-TIME MUSIC

The music on this recording is the result of a semester spent working up songs in an old-time band class in ETSU's Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Country Music Studies program. While there is a lot of fiddle and dance music in our program, this particular group wanted to focus on early country music singing. Old-time bands in our program collectively choose a musical theme each semester, and most often work with songs and tunes from the earliest days of country music recording. Working together to sift through the often obscure songs that were recorded in the 1920s and 30s is a satisfying and fun process, and the band looked for material that seemed to fit the group—not only traditional songs, but also the professionally written songs that hillbilly artists often gravitated to.

Students are encouraged to gather musical ideas that they can use to build a personal style, and to understand the history and context of the music they learn in the class. We believe that creativity and originality can grow from a careful and deliberate study of trusted musical documents. By studying recordings from an era with great musical variety and artistic depth, we hope for students to find a place of their own in the music.

Half of the songs here are borrowed from the Knoxville Sessions, the Brunswick/Vocalion-sponsored location recordings from 1929-30 reissued in 2016 by Bear Family Records. The band tried to remain true to the quirks of the original recordings, and to even accentuate the odd musical twists and turns, but in the end these songs were allowed to settle in a natural way and were ever-evolving. We also added several Patsy Montana songs to feature singer Kristi Hedtke, who grew up on the North Dakota grasslands listening to and singing (and yodeling) cowboy songs.

Just before our studio sessions, Martin Fisher of Middle Tennessee State University brought his wax cylinder machine to campus for a great day of recording into the big 6-foot horn. The band recorded about 20 cylinders that afternoon and we've included several here.

~Roy Andrade, Fall 2017

KRISTI HEDTKE
guitar,
lead vocal
(2, 5, 8, 9, 11)

CORBIN HAYSLETT
banjo, guitar (10),
lead vocal (1,3)

ROY ANDRADE
fiddle

KARL ZERFAS
bass

CAMERON RAGSDALE
mandolin,
lead vocal
(4, 7)

Produced by Roy Andrade
Recorded at the ETSU Recording Laboratory
Recorded and mixed by Ben Bateson
Cylinder recordings by Martin Fisher
Mastered by Randy LeRoy at Airshow Mastering
Artwork by Grace Van't Hof
Photo by Dan Boner

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TRACK LISTING & SOURCE

1. BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN BLUES (2:54)
Cal Davenport & His Gang, Knoxville Sessions (1929)

2. ROLL ALONG PRAIRIE MOON (3:30)
Patsy Montana (1935)

3. AIN'T IT HELL, BOYS > HELL AMONG THE YEARLINGS (4:50)
Smoky Mountain Ramblers, Knoxville Sessions > Kessinger Brothers (1930/1928)

4. GOODBYE DIXIE DEAR (2:46)
Gibbs Brothers with Claude Davis, Knoxville Sessions (1930)

5. WON'T YOU WALTZ HOME SWEET HOME WITH ME (3:27)
Ballard Cross, Knoxville Sessions (1929)

6. HOME SWEET HOME (1:40)
From various sources

7. BACK TO OLD SMOKY MOUNTAIN (3:08)
Smoky Mountain Ramblers, Knoxville Sessions (1930)

8. COME BACK TO YOUR DOBIE SHACK (2:43)
Wade Mainer (1936)

WAX CYLINDER RECORDINGS:

9. RIDIN' OLD PAINT (2:08)
Patsy Montana (1935)

10. EAST TENNESSEE BLUES (2:19)
Charlie Bowman and the Hill Billies (1926)

11. PRIDE OF THE PRAIRIE (2:43)
Patsy Montana (1937)

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